



‘There is a great deal of linguistic material (other than actually Elvish names) included or mythologically expressed in the book. It is to me, anyway, largely an essay in linguistic aesthetic.’ (Tolkien, 2006a: p.220)

Introduction

- Tolkien stated the above when describing what *The Lord of the Rings* was about, or rather, refuting the fact that was indeed about anything ‘other than itself’. (Tolkien, 2006a: p. 220)
- Studies on sound symbolism and *The Lord of the Rings* are often limited to the Elvish languages, such as Rausch (2014) and often overlook the source languages of Anglo-Saxon, Old Norse, Welsh and Finnish for their phonaesthetics and how Tolkien applies them to Middle-earth.
- Tolkien was heavily concerned with and influenced by the phonetic fitness of word form, that is, how sound can ‘fit’ meaning. (Phonaesthetics)
- 'Certainly it is the *contemplation* of the relation between sound and notion which is a main source of pleasure.’ (Tolkien, 2006b: p.206)

Aims

- To demonstrate how linguistic material can be expressed mythologically, in this case through nomenclature.
- What this linguistic material is.
- How this contributes to *The Lord of the Rings*’ status as ‘an essay in linguistic aesthetic’. (Tolkien, 2006a: p.220)

Phonaesthetic Sources

- When creating language, Tolkien was heavily influenced by Anglo-Saxon, Old Norse, Welsh and Finnish.
- When referencing ‘beauty’ in sound, Tolkien necessities the disassociation of sound and spelling. (Tolkien, 2006b: p.190)
- Some examples of phonaesthetic associations extracted from these languages and their application to nomenclature of *The Lord of the Rings* can be seen below:

Source Language	Phonaesthetic Associations	Extracted Sound(s)	Application in <i>LOTR</i>
Old English	Root GUP- Associations with battle, enemies, war. Guþscaþa - ‘enemy’ Ellen(ern) - ‘elder tree / of elder’	/u/ /uþ/ /guþ/ /sh/ /el/	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Quenya Root GUL- (glowing, fire)• /g/ & /sh/ - Shagrat, Shelob• /el/, /l/ to denote age (Elves referred to as ‘Eldar’)
Old Norse	Saurr - ‘filth’ Morðvíg - ‘murder’ Ugga - ‘fear’	/ur/ /or/ /m/	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Clear extraction of ‘Saurr’ in ‘Sauron’• ‘Mor’ extracted and used in Mordor, Morgul
Welsh	Lloches - refuge, shelter, shield Llonydd - calm, quiet, serene	/llo/	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Extraction of /lo/ combined with Finnish /olo/ below• Use in Lothlorien - a place of refuge and enchantment
Finnish	Olo - being, feeling or mental state	/olo/	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• One’s mental state is altered in Lothlorien, as if in a dream• The dual mental state of Gollum / Sméagol
Other Associations	The letter /a/ in Middle-earth nomenclature appears to be associated with wisdom, as opposed to /el/ and /e/ which have connotations concerning being ‘elder’ as evidence by Elvish names carrying the /l/ or /el/ sound. That is, all except Arwen, who gives up her Elvish immortality to remain in Middle-earth.		

‘Light’ & ‘Dark’ Names

‘Light’ Names (Use of /i/, /l/, /e/)		Dark’ Names (Use of /u/ & /ul/ & /gor/)
Sam Merry Pippin Legolas Gimli Elrond Elladhan Elrohir Arwen Faramir	Gandalf Glorfindel Théoden Éomer Éowyn Treebeard	Sauron Saruman Shelob Shagrat Gollum Sméagol Gorbag Nazgûl (Minas) Morgul
Ambiguous Names (Potential for both Light and Dark or Associations with Enchantment) (Use of /o/, /lo/ & /or/)		
Boromir Aragorn Glorfindel Lothlorien		Frodo Bilbo Denethor
‘Elder’ Names (Use of /e/ and /el/)		
Elrond Galadriel Celeborn Elladan		Elrohir Shelob Treebeard Quickbeam

Conclusion

By extracting sounds and phonaesthetic associations from languages associated with myth, Tolkien achieves the mythological expression of linguistic material, while disassociating the sense from spelling he stated was required to appreciate the aesthetic beauty of language.

References
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